Aviation and Aerospace
Budget Requests Addressing Critical Workforce Needs

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS) 2016 - 2017 study on Aviation and Aerospace made recommendations to strengthen workforce development programs to support of Virginia's aviation and aerospace industries. These budget amendments are supported independently by studies conducted by the Virginia Department of Aviation's 2017 Workforce plan as well as the Virginia Chamber's Blueprint 2025.

Virginia has a vibrant and rapidly growing aviation and aerospace industry. This growth is only hampered by a workforce unable to meet the demand. Whether in the new age of unmanned systems, general or commercial aviation or aerospace a job awaits Virginia's young people. Job opportunities exist in programing, engineering and design, logistics, electronics, maintenance, mechanical, logistics, pilots, air crew and a host of many other opportunities.

Both industry and government have created hundreds of training opportunities to entice young people into this growth industry while at the same time one sizable hurdle has been identified for access to these programs. There is no single avenue for access thus creating a fragmented approach to opportunity exposure.

The proposed funding will expand existing Virginia sponsored programs to provide business and industry, academia and citizens a portal for access to all known and often free workforce development tools. Principal focus calls for the creation of a central clearinghouse for the more than 185 available resources, greater focus to students and job seekers for aviation and aerospace job/career opportunities, access to available training and education opportunities, clearinghouse to business for student internships, summer career camps and pilot training for high school age children.

The Virginia Space Grant Consortium (VSGC), comprised of NASA, Virginia universities, state agencies and other NGO partners, was identified as the logical entity to lead these initiatives. Jointly funded by NASA and the Commonwealth of Virginia, the VSGC proactively promotes STEM education and workforce development and research programs by successfully leveraging funding and statewide partnerships. Leveraging the support of the Commonwealth and NASA, the VSGC has entered into partnerships with NGO organizations such as the Virginia Aviation Business Association, Virginia Aerospace Business Association, National Institute of Aerospace, Airport Cooperative Research Program of the Transportation Research Board, Virginia Regional Technology Councils, and numerous others to tie existing programs and resources to those looking to enter the aerospace industry as a career.

Budget Requests

1) Online Information Portal for Aviation and Aerospace Education and Workforce Development Programs and Events

Virginia business, students and academia have more than 185 training and academic resources available to them, many free of charge. These programs are difficult to access as there is no centralized clearinghouse for these programs.

- VSGC will develop and manage an Online Portal to provide a continuously updated, relevant, searchable website providing relevant information about education and workforce programs, career pathways and events.
- The website and database will be easily accessible to citizens, business and industry and academia.
- VSGC staff will answer questions, advise and help connect people to resources throughout the Commonwealth.

Funding request: $120,000 in Caboose Bill and $293,000 each year of the biennium.

2) Virginia Aviation Scholars Program (VASP)

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To meet industry workforce needs young people need to be introduced to aviation and aerospace opportunities while in high school and before.

- VSGC will expand its award-winning, best practice program, the Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars (VASTS) program, to offer the Virginia Aviation Scholars program (VASP) at no cost to students statewide in grades 10-12, providing a Fundamentals of Aviation online course for Career and Technical Education and dual enrollment credit for at least 200 students each year.
- High-performing students would participate in a one-week residential summer academy post course completion. Two academies are proposed for a total of 80 participants.

Funding request: $340,000 in each year of the biennium.

3) Expansion of Paid Aviation and Aerospace Internships through the Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program

There is a demonstrated need to develop and provide aviation and aerospace internship opportunities to students throughout the Commonwealth.

- VSGC will expand the state-funded Commonwealth STEM Industry Internship Program (CSIIP) to recruit aviation and aerospace companies willing to provide interns, and seed-sponsored internships for high-needs aviation and aerospace jobs to students.

Funding request: $264,000 in each year of the biennium.

4) BLAST (Building Leaders Advancing Science and Technology) – Aviation Focused Sessions

Expand opportunities throughout Virginia to introduce young people to career opportunities while in high school

- Funding for VSGC to expand the award-winning BLAST program offering two additional summer sessions dedicated to aviation. Programs would be held at universities like Liberty University School of Aeronautics and Averett University and others with strong aviation programs. BLAST provides a three-day, STEM intensive, hands-on residential summer college experience at no cost to students prior to grades 9 and 10. New sessions would offer hands-on, immersive experiences through which students will learn about aviation careers and pathways.

Funding request: $168,000 in each year of the biennium.

On-line Aviation and Aerospace Portal (1x Development cost)	$ 120,000
On-line Aviation and Aerospace Portal	$ 293,000
Virginia Aerospace Aviation Scholars Program	$ 340,000
Aviation and Aerospace Internship Program	$ 264,000
Building Leaders Advancing Science and Technology	$ 168,000
Total First Year:	$ 1,185,000
Subsequent annual operating cost:	$ 1,065,000

Contact: Bud Oakey, Virginia Aviation Business Association, Boakey@TheVABA.org; (804) 228-4505 and/or Mary Sandy, Virginia Space Grant Consortium, msandy@odu.edu; (757) 766-5210 (office), (757) 218-4496 (mobile)